

HEALTH AWARENESS

PREVENTION OF PERIODONTAL DISEASE

Two Things You Should Know About Your Health

Blood Pressure (NHLBI)

Normal	Below 120/ 80
Pre-hypertension	120-139/ 80-89

If your blood pressure is 'high' that means that you have hypertension.

Stage 1 hypertension	140-159/ 90-99
Stage 2 hypertension	More than 160/ 100

Blood Glucose

A fasting blood sugar (glucose) test measures the blood glucose level after 8 hours of fasting or overnight. Normal fasting blood glucose is less than 100mg/dl. If your level is consistently from 100mg/dl to 125mg/dl then you have 'Pre-Diabetes'. If you have a fasting blood glucose level of 126mg/dl or higher in two consecutive tests, then you may have diabetes. If you have a random, non-fasting blood glucose level greater than 200mg/dl and you have symptoms of diabetes like increased thirst or hunger, frequent urination, weight loss, or blurred vision, then you may be diagnosed with diabetes mellitus without confirming it with second test. A normal random, non-fasting blood glucose level should be less than 200mg/dl. But if your random, non-fasting blood glucose level is consistently between 140mg/dl to 200mg/dl, then you are considered to have pre-diabetes.

-Diabetes Symptoms Cure

Periodontal disease, also known as periodontitis, is a chronic bacterial infection of the tissues that surround and support the teeth. A mild form, known as gingivitis, is the beginning stage of the disease. The gums will appear red, swollen, and bleed easily. Gingivitis can be reversible with adequate oral hygiene. Brushing twice a day, flossing, and using an antiseptic mouth rinse are important to stop the progression of the disease. Chlorhexadine gluconate 0.12% oral rinse, also called 'Peridex' or 'Periogard', is available with a prescription to treat gingivitis. This can be used after brushing and flossing twice a day. Usual instructions are to gargle one capful (15mL) for 30 seconds, then expectorate (spit out). The medicine should not be swallowed and patients should not eat for 2-3 hours after treatment.

If gingivitis is not properly treated, it may progress to periodontitis. This occurs when bacteria release toxins causing the body to produce an immune response. Pockets, or empty spaces, develop between the gums and the teeth as a result of the inflammation. Eventually, the tissues that support the teeth are destroyed which can lead tooth loss. To prevent the progression of periodontitis, your dentist may prescribe doxycycline hyclate 20mg. twice a day, for up to 9 months. The brand name of the medication is 'Periostat'. At this dose, doxycycline hyclate works to reduce the amount of gum and tissue destroying enzymes. This is sometimes used as an adjunct to a dental 'tooth and gum scaling' and/or 'root planing,' which is a cleaning below the gum-line.

In summary, good oral hygiene is the key to preventing periodontal disease. Regular dental check-ups with 'professional teeth cleaning' should be part of this routine.

Shane Zack, R.Ph.

HANDWASHING AS INFECTION PREVENTION

Hand washing is a simple habit that can help keep you and the people you take care of healthy. Hand washing, if done properly, is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick. Germs accumulate on your hands from a variety of sources, such as direct contact with people and contaminated surfaces. If your hands are not washed frequently and effectively you can infect yourself with 'germs', as well as the people you care for.

Gloves serve as protection. However, once gloved hands have touched a person or contaminated surface or object, they also become contaminated and should never touch a clean surface. Gloved hands can also spread germs by touching surfaces such as bedrails, adaptive equipment, dresser drawers, and most importantly door knobs. Some infectious diseases commonly spread by hand to hand contact include the common cold, flu, and several gastrointestinal disorders such as infectious diarrhea and C. difficile.

Proper hand washing techniques with soap and water include the following steps:

1. Wet hands with warm running water and apply soap. Lather well.
2. Rub hands vigorously together for at least 15 to 20 seconds.
3. Scrub all surfaces including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails.
4. Rinse well.
5. Dry hands with a clean disposable towel.
6. Use towel to turn off faucet and open doorknob.
7. Dispose of towel in appropriate trash-can.

Following the proper hand washing techniques are instrumental in preventing the spread of germs and infectious diseases. This simple habit will help provide us and those we care for with a healthy living and working environment. **Kelly Ellingsworth, RN**